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FOLLOWING REPEAT OF BAGHDAD 719 ACTION SECSTATE
INFO ABU DHABI ALGEIRS AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO JIDDA
DAMASCUS KUWAIT LONDON MOSCOW PARIS TEHRAN TEL
AVIV 24 OCTOBER 1974. QUOTE:

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0719

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: RESURGENCE OF SOVIET ACTIVITY IN IRAQ

REF: BAGHDAD 317 OF 5/15/74

1. IRAQI POLICY TREND TOWARD NON-ALIGNMENT AND
RAPPROCHEMENT WITH WEST APPEARS TO HAVE RESULTED IN MAJOR
SOVIET EFFORT TO AVOID DISPLACEMENT BY WEST. IRAQI REGIME
VULNERABLE TO SOVIET PRESSURES BECAUSE OF KURDISH WAR AND
WHAT IT PERCEIVES AS MILITARY THREAT FROM IRAN. ALTHOUGH
SOVIETS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO REVERSE TREND, THEY MAY SUCCEED
IN SLOW DOWN. FOR THE U.S., THIS COULD MEAN LIMITATION
ON ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND FURTHER DELAY IN RESUMPTION OF
NORMAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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2. AS DEPARTMENT WELL AWARE, IRAQI REGIME MOVED RAPIDLY

AFTER IPC SETTLEMENT IN FEBRUARY 1973 TO EXPAND RELATIONS WITH WEST AND DECREASE RELIANCE ON USSR, MOST NOTABLY THROUGH ECONOMIC RAPPROCHEMENT WITH WEST AND JAPAN AND RESUMING RELATIONS WITH UK AND FRG. ON NEGATIVE SIDE FOR USSR, THERE WAS IRAQI INSISTENCE THAT SOVIETS PAY MARKET PRICE IN HARD CURRENCY FOR OIL, CLOSURE OF SOVIET, CZECH, AND EAST GERMAN CULTURAL CENTERS, VIRTUAL IGNORING OF PROVISIONS ON CONSULTATIONS IN IRAQI-SOVIET TREATY OF APRIL 1972, AND SEVERAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN WHICH STRESSED IRAQI INDEPENDENCE FROM USSR. IN SHORT, MAIN THRUST OF IRAQI POLICY SINCE MARCH 1973 HAS BEEN TOWARD REAL NON-ALIGNMENT AND REPLACEMENT OF SOVIETS AS MAJOR ECONOMIC PARTNER BY WEST.

3. SITUATION OBVIOUSLY NOT LIKING OF SOVIETS AND COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS THROUGHOUT EARLY MONTHS OF 1974 EXPRESSED EXASPERATION WITH IRAQI PRICKLY BEHAVIOR. SOVIETS NO DOUBT WISHED TO REVERSE THIS TREND BUT REALIZED THEIR MEANS OF INFLUENCE LIMITED AND MUST BE USED WITH CAUTION TO AVOID MORE ADVERSE REACTION. SOVIETS WERE ASSISTED BY ERUPTION OF LARGE SCALE FIGHTING AGAINST KURDS IN LATE SPRING AND RESULTING IRAQI NEED FOR MILITARY SUPPLIES AND PROTECTION FROM PERCEIVED MILITARY THREAT FROM IRAN. SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL VISITORS IN FIRST HALF OF 1974 (REFTEL) SEEM TO HAVE SIGNALLED SOVIET DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN POSITION.

4. EVENTS SINCE THAT TIME APPEAR TO SUPPORT THIS CONTENTION AND THAT IRAQIS ARE VULNERABLE:

(A) PUBLICLY, SOVIETS SEEN TO STAND FIRMLY BEHIND BAATH REGIME'S EFFORT TO RESOLVE KURDISH PROBLEM THROUGH FORCED APPLICATION OF IRAQI VERSION OF SOVIET "NATIONALITIES POLICY". PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, SOVIETS BELIEVED TO SEE BENEFITS OF KEEPING KURDISH REVOLT ALIVE AS MEANS OF PRESSURE ON BAGHDAD.

(B) SOVIET SUPPLY OF IRAQ WITH HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT; TO BEST OF USINT'S KNOWLEDGE IRAQ IS ONLY COUNTRY OUTSIDE USSR TO HAVE RECEIVED TU-22 SUPERSONIC
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MEDIUM BOMBERS AND ONE OF VERY FEW TO RECEIVE MIG-23S AND SU-20 FIGHTER BOMBERS. IT HAS ALSO RECEIVED SA-2, SA-3, AND SA-7 MISSILES.

(C) LIKLIHOOD THAT ABRUPT CHANGE IN IRAQI OIL POLICY ON EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION IN JUNE 1974 WAS RESULT OF SOVIET DISPLEASURE. CONTRACTS WERE VIRTUALLY CERTAIN TO HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO FRENCH-LED CONSORTIUM

AND SOME AMERICAN COMPANIES (BAGHDAD 459).

(D) CONTINUAL STREAM OF HIGH LEVEL AND PARTY AND FRONT DELEGATIONS TO USSR, MOST RECENTLY THAT OF FORMER FORMIN TAQA WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN OCCASION FOR LAVISH PRAISE FROM MOSCOW RADIO (FBIS SEPT 23 PP F1 AND F2) LAUDING SOVIET-IRAQI RELATIONS AS "EXAMPLE OF COMPREHENSIVE COOPERATION OF WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT AND NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT". OTHER RECENT VISITORS INCLUDED IRAQI CHIEF OF STAFF ABDUL JABBAR SHANSHAL (RECEIVED BY MARSHAL GRECHKO SEPTEMBER 26) AND BAATH PARTY DEL HEADED BY REGIONAL LEADERSHIP MEMBER ABDUL FATTAH YASSIN FOR 10 DAY VISIT AT INVITATION CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CPSU.

(E) WILLINGNESS OF BAATH REGIME TO ALLOW COMMUNIST FRONT ORGANIZATION TO EXPLOIT IRAQ FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSE; RECENT CONFERENCE IN SUPPORT OF DPRK IN COOPERATION WITH AAPSO AND SCHEDULED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON OIL AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 1-4 UNDER AUSPICES OF WORLD PEACE COUNCIL AND AAPSO.

5. DESPITE SOVIET EFFORTS AND IRAQI VULNERABILITY, THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT REGIME IS DETERMINED TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT COURSE. IT IS INCREASINGLY ADOPTING RADICAL ARAB BRAND OF NON-ALIGNMENT THROUGH CONTINUING CONTACTS WITH ALGERIA AND YUGOSLAVIA.

WESTERN COMPANIES, PARTICULARLY FRENCH, CONTINUE TO WIN MAJOR CONTRACTS. YUGOSLAVIA HAS BEEN ASKED TO TAKE ON ONE BILLION DOLLAR AGRICULTURAL COMPLEX ALONG YUGOSLAV MODEL. IRAQI MILITARY BELIEVED TO BE STRONGLY NATIONALIST AND IS URGENTLY SEEKING MILITARY SUPPLIES AND TRAINING FROM FRENCH, BRITISH, DUTCH AND OTHER NON-SECRET

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SOVIET SOURCES. THESE IRAQI INITIATIVES ARE OF COURSE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF EXPANDED OIL REVENUES. ANOTHER SIGN OF UNDERLYING BAATHI RESISTANCE TO SOVIET INFLUENCE IS CONTINUING VIGILANCE TOWARD ICP (BAGHDAD 718). IN RECENT DAYS ALGERIAN, YUGOSLAV AND EGYPTIAN AMBASSADORS HAVE ALL INDEPENDENTLY EXPRESSED TO ME THEIR SATISFACTION WITH DIRECTION OF IRAQI POLICY.

6. CONCLUSION I DRAW FROM PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IS THAT SOVIETS ARE MAKING VERY MAJOR BUT CAUTIOUS EFFORTS THROUGH VARIETY OF OVERT AND COVERT MEANS TO REVERSE IRAQ'S DRIFT TOWARD REAL NON-ALIGNMENT. THEY APPEAR THUS FAR TO BE HAVING ONLY SLIGHT SUCCESS. WHETHER THEY ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN FUTURE IS LIKELY TO BE DETERMINED BY OUTCOME OF KURDISH WAR AND CONFLICT WITH IRAN. ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR

GOES SO FAR AS TO SAY IF BAATH CAN SUBDUE BARZANI IT WILL
BE BEGINNING OF END FOR ICP AND MEANINGFUL SOVIET
INFLUENCE IN IRAQ. FOR THE U.S., SOVIET SUCCESSES COULD
MEAN SLOW DOWN IN BOOMING U.S. EXPORTS (120 MILLION DOLS
FOR FIRST 8 MONTHS 1974)AND LIKHOOD THAT IRAQ
DECISION TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WOULD BE FURTHER
DELAYED.

7. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY MOSCOW COMMENTS.
LOWRIE

UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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